

Local Trust Strategy 2020-6

The coming decade, while bringing many opportunities, will be volatile and deeply challenging for people and their communities. The Covid-19 crisis will have ramifications for years to come, not just for health systems and the economy, but for all of society. Meanwhile issues like the climate crisis, automation and political polarisation have not gone away, and will place communities under even greater pressure.

Local Trust believes that empowered, resilient, dynamic, asset-rich communities making decisions on what is best for their own areas will be best placed to meet those challenges.

Our work – founded around the Big Local programme supporting 150 communities around the country to deliver resident-led change - doesn't just aim to improve how communities function. We also want to contribute to the important emerging debate about how to recast our wider economic, political and social settlement.

We will work through 2020 to 2026 in pursuit of the following long-term outcomes, recognising that we can only play a part in their achievement.

We hope that by 2026:

1. The Big Local programme has been successfully delivered and Local Trust has provided the support necessary for Big Local partnerships to put in place their plans for legacy and sustainability.
2. The approach and principles that underpin Big Local – that funding for communities should be long-term, resident-led, patient, place-based, non-judgmental – are mainstream across civil society, private and public sectors.
3. There has been a structural change in our economy, society and politics, which leads to greater devolution of power, with local people and communities having more control over resources and decision-making.
4. There has been a tangible improvement in the social and economic capacity of 'left-behind areas', as a result of new community-led investment in rebuilding social capital and civic infrastructure, alongside the increase in public investment to deliver economic change.

To effect this change Local Trust will focus at three levels:

People and communities

Local Trust was established in 2012 to deliver Big Local and this will remain central to our work through to the conclusion of the programme in 2026.

Our ambition is both to maximise the impact of Big Local in the places that are part of the programme, and to ensure that it also has impact and influence well beyond the boundaries of those communities.

We believe that the collective achievements of Big Local partnerships showcase the value and potential of long-term resident-led change. Learning and insight gained from Big Local is central to the evidence base we actively share with others to influence and inform policymakers, funders and communities involved in similar initiatives to improve the places in which they live.

Between 2020 and 2026 we will:

- 1 - Ensure the effective delivery of Big Local through to its conclusion
- 2 - Support all our Big Local areas to build sustainable legacies
- 3 - Support Big Local areas to strengthen links with each other at an individual and community level
- 4 - Support Big Local areas to strengthen links with people, places and institutions not directly involved in the Big Local programme
- 5 - Significantly increase the number of people and communities benefiting from our experience, capacity and learning

The enablers of change

The current system of funding, goals and priorities, values, mindset, culture and capabilities, across all sectors, is stacked against local people trying to lead change in their own communities.

Local Trust will work with others seeking to transform the wider system so that it functions to shift power to communities, focusing in particular on left-behind communities where power and resource are often most lacking. We will also seek to shift blockages to the transfer of power, and support communities who seek to challenge them.

In doing so, we will make use of evidence and insight from the Big Local programme and from Big Local areas themselves.

Between 2020 and 2026 we will:

- 6 - Promote a compelling narrative of thriving, powerful communities and use it to influence, shift mindsets and change behaviour
- 7 - Actively connect Big Local areas and the programme as a whole to wider issues and campaigns, enabling local communities to demonstrate their relevance and impact, and achieve influence beyond their own boundaries

8 - Strengthen relationships with the people and organisations who are most critical in enabling an increase in community power

9 - Experiment with different ways to enable change, learn and continually improve our practice

Sustaining our impact into the long term

Local Trust will work to ensure that its impact and legacy endures beyond the end of the Big Local programme.

Between 2020 and 2026 we will:

10 - Make the case for major, long-term initiatives to shift power and resources to communities

11 - Build a sustained body of research, practice and knowledge capable of influencing beyond the end of Big Local